

State Procurement Office  
Procurement of Health and Human Services  
Chapter 103F, HRS

How to Utilize

**The Request for Information  
(RFI)**

in Contracting for Health and Human Services

This workshop is designed for RFIs  
when contracting for health and human  
services but the principles can be used  
for any good or service.

## A Little Bit about SPO

- Chapter 103D, HRS – The Procurement Code  
(goods services and construction)
- Chapter 103F, HRS – Purchases of Health and Human Services (This workshop)
- Inventory Management & Excess Property  
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## About Chapter 103F and Chapter 103D

Chapter <b>103D</b> , HRS	Chapter <b>103F</b> , HRS
The Procurement Code	Purchases of Health and Human Services
Goods, services and construction	Health and human services
Applies to: State & county agencies	Applies to: State agencies Optional for Counties

## What is an RFI?

- An RFI (Request for Information) is a tool used to gather, share and clarify information.
- It can be conducted in many ways: in writing, conducting a meeting or any other means including but not limited to:
  - e-mail,
  - teleconference,
  - video conference.

## Conducting an RFI Guiding Principles

- Be open
  - Open to all may be interested.
  - Open to hearing other points of view.
- Be fair
  - The RFI may not exclude or give unfair advantage.

## Purpose of an RFI

- Gather information
- Share and clarify information
- Incubate ideas

## RFIs for Health and Human Services

Requirements Pursuant to 3-142-202, HAR

- “...At a minimum, a purchasing agency shall prepare a request for information prior to the development of a request for proposals to obtain community input and facilitate community planning activities...”
- “...Public notice shall be given for all requests for information in accordance with section [3-141-407](#) and shall be posted for a minimum of seven days...”

## RFIs for Health and Human Services

- An RFI must be conducted whenever developing/preparing to issue an RFP.
- Notice of the RFI must be published on the internet (PNS).
- An RFI must be in writing.

## How do I know if a Procurement is Subject to 103F, HRS?

1. The procurement must be for services (as opposed to goods.)
2. The service must be intended to maintain or improve health or social well-being and may include assessment, treatment, diagnosis, prevention or educational services.
3. The service is to be provided **directly to a targeted clientele.**

## What are Permissible Subjects for an RFI?

- Long- and short-term goals/objectives, or the objective of a procurement;
- Target population to be served;
- Services the purchasing agency anticipates may be necessary to achieve its goals and objectives;
- Service specifications, feasibility, or cost;
- Request for expressions of interest to provide a service.

## Examples of Subjects for RFIs

- **Configuration of services**  
(Different combinations of services or geographic areas of services)
- **Method of payment**  
(Capitated rates, unit rates, guaranteed minimums, etc.)
- **Target population**  
(Expand/contract target population, include service for family members or significant others)
- **Personnel requirements**  
(Require one MSW licensed social workers per 4 case managers who will supervise the 3 BA licensed social workers instead of all MSW.)

## The RFI Notice

- The **name of the state agency** issuing the request;
- A **description of the information** being sought (you can be brief and refer to another document);
- The **procedure for responding** (when where how, who, etc.);
- If applicable, **other means by which the request for information is being solicited** (such as a presentation, meeting, telephone survey, electronic media, or any combination of these methods; and
- The following two statements:

## The RFI Notice (continued)

1. Participation is optional, and is not required to respond to any subsequent procurement action a purchasing agency may take.
2. Neither the purchasing agency nor the interested party responding has any obligation under the request for information.

## The RFI Notice

### *How Long???*

- Must be posted for a minimum of 7 days. Give more time whenever possible (2 weeks is better.)
- Deadline for response may not be less than 7 days. Notice must remain up until deadline.
- If there will be an RFI meeting, give more time. Be fair. Schedules fill up on short notice.

## The RFI Meeting

- Be Prepared!
- Developing an RFP is a team effort. Have members of the the team present. (The community is part of the team, too.)
- Have an agenda.
- Have someone from your office take notes.



## The RFI Meeting

*(continued)*

- Answer questions.
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know. We will get back to you on that."
- Have a way to get back to attendees.  
(For instance, a sign-in sheet with names and e-mail addresses.)

## The RFI Meeting

*(Continued)*

- Make the deadline for written responses after the meeting.
  - Great ideas sometimes occur after-the-fact.
  - Give those who could not attend an opportunity to respond.

## Summarizing Results of the RFI

- Summarize approximately how many responded.
  - How many attended the meeting.
  - How many written responses.
- Summarize the issues.
  - Generally questions are grouped into clusters of issues.
- Summarize the purchasing agency's response.
  - Measures the purchasing agency plans to take in response to the feedback.

## Summarizing RFI Results *Who Responded*

“Approximately 35 individuals from 27 organizations attended the RFI general meeting held on March 8, 2006. Over 35 written responses were received. Most of the responses were from providers of services to youth and the majority of those were nonprofit providers on Oahu. Several responses were from parents and one was from an interested community member...”

## Summarizing RFI Results

### *The Issues*

**“Unit Rate:** There were several comments about the unit rate. Most had to do with the issue of being paid the same unit rate for high intensity clients as low intensity clients and how this leads to “creaming.” There was one suggestion that pricing be a fixed price for an entire program and that only one contract awarded statewide. There was also a suggestion about utilizing capitated rates.

**Service Configuration:** There was one suggestion that services be configured for one provider to provide XXX services statewide. There were several other comments in this area reflecting that one statewide was unnecessary, severely limited competition and was neither advisable or feasible.”

## Summarizing the RFI Results

### *Response to Feedback*

**“Unit Rate:** It is unlikely there will be more than a slight increase in the total funds available for this service. OYS will work establish a graded unit rate for high and low intensity clients. OYS has no experience with capitated rates for this type of service and would appreciate assistance from any providers/clients or interested community members who have knowledge of using capitated rates with this type of service.

**Service Configuration:** The biggest concern was the possibility of soliciting for one statewide contract. Several providers indicated it was not feasible in this field. OYS will continue to contract by geographic area (by island) with the exception that separate proposals will be accepted for East and West Hawaii...”

## The Timeline for an RFI

- Varies depending on what the purchasing agency is seeking.
- Feasibility of a new service- RFI will occur early in the process.
- An established service- might include a draft of the service specifications and might be issued a little later in the process.

## Timeline for an RFI (continued)

- Give as much advance notice as possible when there will be significant change in an RFP.  
This allows providers to plan for services more effectively and benefits the client.
- For quality information, it must flow both ways.  
Allow time for respondents to ask clarifying questions.
- Recommended time for conducting an RFI is 2 to 9 months prior to the procurement notice for an RFP.

### The RFI Pursuant to Section 3-143-614, HAR

- This is **not** an exemption from procurement whenever Federal Funds are involved.
- This special procedure may **not** be used with block grant federal funds.
- This special procedure is to be utilized when:
  - A state agency applies for a federal grant;
  - Grant application requires a description of how the funds will be spent; and
  - It is necessary or will increase the likelihood that the state agency will be awarded by naming the provider(s) in the grant application.

### RFIs Pursuant to 3-143-614, HAR (continued)

- Notice must be posted on the PNS for a minimum of 7 days. (Longer is better.)
- The names of all who responded and the justification for the selection shall be included as part of the procurement file. (This means it is open to the public.)

## RFI for Federal Grant Applications

### *What Must be Included*

- The state agency issuing the request.
- A statement that the the request is issued for the purpose of including a provider (or providers) in a federal grant application and that if awarded, may result in a contract with the provider(s).
- A description of the services.
- The criteria by which the provider(s) will be selected.
- The deadline for submission of responses.
- Contact information for questions

## RFI for Federal Grant Applications

### *(continued)*

- Request responses in writing, even if you hold a meeting.
- In describing the services do not simply refer applicants to the Federal website. Federal websites are very confusing and sometimes the web address changes.

## Utilizing the RFI

### *Summary*

- Can be used to for a variety of purposes.
- Required when preparing an RFP for health and human services.
- Must be posted on the PNS for a minimum of 7 days.
- Can conduct more than one RFI.
- Providing the results of the RFI is extremely helpful.
- There are many ways an RFI can be conducted.  
Check the Procurement Notices Website (PNS) to see how other purchasing agencies conduct theirs.

## Questions?

The SPO website

[www.spo.hawaii.gov](http://www.spo.hawaii.gov)

Click on “Health and Human Services Ch. 103F, HRS...”

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